

PRUNINGS
FROM
VACA VALLEY



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V. H. S. '05.

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THIS PAMPHLET is published by the members of the American History Class of 1930-1931 of Vacaville High School as an effort to preserve a few of the facts and recollections of our pioneers, in order that they may not be entirely lost or forgotten.

The class is deeply indebted to the following for their kind assistance in making this pamphlet possible: Mr. Ned Wolfskill; Mrs. Maria Dolores Lyon; Mr. James McCrory, Sr.; Mrs. E. C. Crystal; Dr. W. L. Jepson; Mrs. Ross Ryan; Mr. Neat Tate; Mrs. William B. Dykes; Mr. Meredith Miller; the Vacaville Reporter; Mr. George Samuels, and many others.

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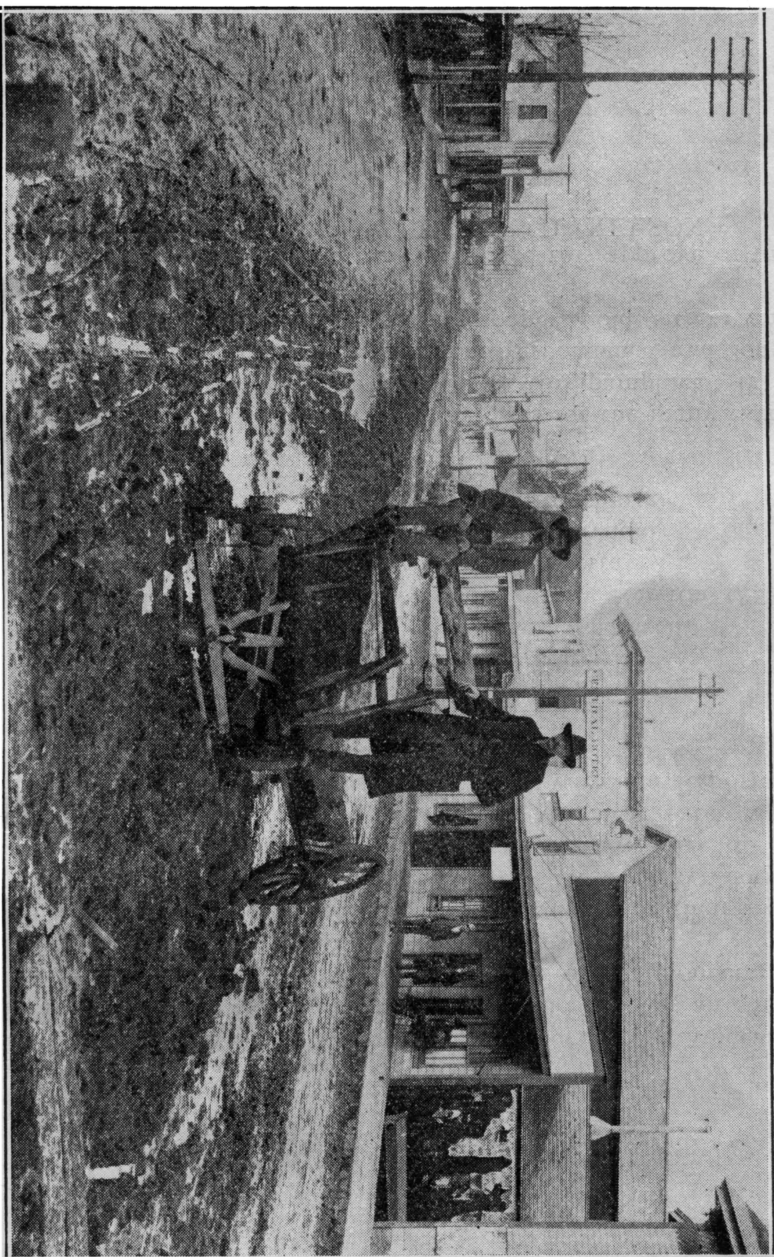
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I wish to thank the members of the class for the many extra hours they have spent on the production of this pamphlet. It is the product of many interviews, much correspondence and long, weary searches through numberless newspapers, old letters and dusty collections of pictures and books.

May those for whom you have produced this approve of the fruit of your labors.

ELEANOR D. NELSON.



MAIN STREET LOOKING WEST FROM BRIDGE, 1895

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF VACAVILLE

Before 1849 the number of Indians in Solano County had been greatly reduced by two major events.

In 1817 Lieutenant Jose Sanchez of Mexico attempted to Christianize the Siusunes Indians. When Sanchez crossed the Carquinez Straits he was attacked by the Suisunes under their leader, Chief Malaca. Sanchez forced them back to their rancheria, near Rockville, where they set fire to all of their buildings and nearly all perished in the flames.

Another major tragedy in the Suisunes tribe occurred between the years of 1837 and 1840, when a severe epidemic of smallpox visited them and numbers of them died. The remaining Indians migrated from Suisun Valley to Napa in 1850, leaving this section to Americans, who, by that time, had become numerous in this valley.

By the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, California, with the rest of the Mexican cession, was ceded to the United States by Mexico. The treaty bound the United States to confirm the land grants; noted among these grants being Rancho Rio los Putos; the Wolf-skills; Vaca and Pena grant; Tolenas or Armijo grant, to Armijo a cousin of the Vacas; Bidwell or Los Ulpinos grant. The Vaca and Pena grant consisted of 44,300 acres, embracing both Lagoon and Vaca Valleys and the Town of Vacaville. Many people, called "squatters," came and settled on the grant and shot the cattle and horses. Much money was spent by the Vacas and Penas to protect their property.

Between 1842 and 1846 the Vacas and Penas were almost the only white settlers in Solano County. By 1850 the Stevensons, the Long brothers and Richard and S. W. Long had arrived. In 1851 James W. Pleasants settled in the well-known Pleasants Valley.

It is said that land prices were very cheap. The Long brothers at one time purchased 2,000 acres of land in the heart of the valley for five dollars an acre.

The Town of Vacaville was started in 1851, when Manuel Cabeza de Vaca deeded to William McDaniel nine square miles of land for \$3,000 on condition that one square mile of it be devoted to a town named Vacaville and 200 town lots be deeded to Vaca. In 1856 the deed was confirmed and building commenced.

In 1858 the town had one block of business houses extending from the present Ulatis bridge one block westward. Ulatis Creek

was then merely a small ditch and no bridges were required for crossing it. The road through town crossed the creek where our present bridge stands, and continued in the direction of Bennett's hill.

Senor Vaca wished to build a town where Vacaville now stands to increase the value of his property. As his partner, Senor Pena did not wish to build a town, he traded his piece of land for another farther northward. The matter was taken up with a lawyer and the town was laid out and lots sold. Mason Wilson and Gillespie owned the first store in the town and it was situated where the Star Bakery now stands.

Few streets were paved and did not have even bricks or cobblestones. In winter they were very muddy, often two and three feet deep and therefore high platforms were built in front of stores and along the sides of the streets to serve as sidewalks. These stood for many years.

The first stores did not have show windows. The first show windows were put in in 1892 by Crystal Bros. Dry Goods Store situated in the First National Bank Building where the present Post Office is. After a fire the store was rebuilt and glass show cases built in place of the long folding doors that covered the front of the store.

In 1869 the Vaca Valley and Clear Lake Railway, now owned by the Southern Pacific, was built and it no longer became necessary to haul freight to Suisun by wagon and there load it on schooners and barges.

The first church was the Christian Church, built in 1864 by Arculus Hawkins, and the first school in Vacaville was started by J. N. Anderson in 1854, and occupied a building approximately where the present jail is situated. Mr. Anderson first conducted it as a private school and later sold it to the Methodists South. Many people moved to Vacaville to give their sons and daughters an opportunity to attend college here. The original building burned down and another was built. On 1864 this second building burned, due probably to bitter feeling wrought by the Civil War. No responsibility for the act was ever fixed.

A mass meeting was called to raise funds for a new school and ten acres of land, including College Hill, were given by Mason Wilson. Immediately a contract was let and construction began on the site of our present high school building. The structure was to be of concrete, a new building material at the time. When the first story was nearly completed a heavy rain reduced it to a heap of

ruins and the contractors departed, along with five thousand dollars. After spending an additional two thousand dollars to clear away the debris, a brick building was put up which remained standing until the earthquake of 1896, which completely destroyed it. It is said that the complete destruction of the building was due to an apparently bottomless channel under the basement. In 1897 this loss was repaired by the construction of the present high school building.

Other businesses established in the early days included the telephone office started by Mr. Jim Miller in which for many years he was the only operator. The Bank of Vacaville was the first bank in town, having been started by R. D. Robbins of Suisun, with W. B. Parker of Vacaville as the vice-president. Edward Fisher was the cashier, and for many many years took full charge of all the banking business. At one time Vacaville boasted of sixteen saloons.



INDIANS HERE FIRST

For hundreds of years before the white man came to Vacaville, the Indians had roamed over the hills and valleys. Their headquarters were in Lake County, but regularly twice a year they made a trip through the region around Vaca Valley. The reason for these trips was their age-old custom of going to the bay in search of fish. Every spring they came with all of their families and household goods from Lake County into Solano County by way of Putah Canyon. From Putah Creek they made their way along the foot of the Blue Mountains to Bodega Bay. There they spent the summer catching and drying fish for their winter supply of food. In the fall they went back to their winter headquarters. These journeys were made in a leisurely manner. The Indians traveled for a day and then spent nearly a week at an Indian village or "rancheria." One of these "rancherias" was established directly west of Vacaville. A few Indians stayed there all year, but when the rest of the tribe passed by it blossomed into unaccustomed activity.

This had come to be their established custom, and it was not to be lightly cast off at the advent of the white people. These journeys were very distasteful to the early settlers but they let the Indians pass by in peace, for they knew too much about Indians to interfere.

Chief Solano led his people through the fields with no regard for the grain. About twenty acres of grain was consumed by them as feed for their horses and cattle during every visit. The homeward

trip was worse, though, as the dried fish had a very distasteful odor.

As more settlers appeared, the visits of the Indians became more and more bothersome, but they were stopped abruptly by a malady which the Indians contracted. It was the small-pox, and great numbers of the tribe died of it. After they recovered from that misfortune, the Indians concluded that this region was haunted and have since remained in Lake County.

The Indians around Vacaville were of the Digger tribe. They built very simple kinds of houses. For some they put up several long poles which came together at the top in the shape of a wigwam and put brush and grass on these poles. Other houses were of a round shape and built of mud or clay.

For food the Indians would go out and kill a rabbit, duck or deer. It was common to find rabbits. They would start a big fire of hard white oak wood. After all the logs were burned, a pile of hot coals remained. Then they would take the rabbit as it was and wrap it with mud or clay, preferably clay, and put it into the coals and cover it carefully with coals. After a period of about an hour and a half or two hours they removed the rabbit from under the coals. The clay had become so hard that it had to be broken off. In doing so the hair of the rabbit also was removed with the hard clay, leaving the roasted meat. This tasted very good.

In the summer when the wingless grasshoppers were thick in the hills the Indians would set fire to a field and after it was all burned they would follow in the path of the fire and eat the roasted grasshoppers. These had a sweet flavor.

Another of their foods was ground squirrels. They would shoot numbers of them and later eat them after they were dry.

These Indians were very lazy and of the lowest type. They would never fight, but would steal whenever they got a chance.

The way the Indians made poisoned arrows is interesting. They would go out and kill a deer and proceed to remove its liver. Then they would find a rattlesnake and poke it with the liver which was on the end of a stick. The snake would bite the liver and thus poison it. After this they exposed the liver to the sun and left it there for an entire day in which time the liver became dark green in color. They would take their arrows, put them in this liver and leave them there for about a half hour. When they removed the arrows they were deadly poison.

There are only twelve of these Digger Indians left. They live in the vicinity of Rumsey.

Mr. Pena employed about twenty Indian men and their fami-

lies to look after his sheep, cattle and horses. These Indians lived near the Pena home as they were very ignorant and lazy and had to be shown practically everything they did. Nearly all dances and ceremonies were held at Rockville. There were a few Spanish priests who tried to civilize the Indians. They were paid in food and clothing.

EDWIN MARKHAM'S REPLY TO REQUEST FROM CLASS

West New Brighton, New York,

February 18, 1931

Dear Miss Edith Bassford:

I was a vaquero on my mother's cattle range on the hills walling in Lagoon Valley. This is about all that I know concerning the early history of your region. Yes, I recall that I attended Hesperian College in Vacaville. I think it was called Hesperian, and I rode to it daily on my bucking bronco. Professor J. C. Simmons taught the class in grammar, and a bright teacher he was.

Perhaps your Union High School may be willing to find a place for the two enclosed leaflets of my best known poems. They are revised versions.

Yours Truly,

EDWIN MARKHAM.

P. S.—In about 1868, I ran away from home with my young friend, John Huckins. I heard that he afterwards became a doctor and practiced medicine in Vacaville. Do you happen to know his whereabouts?

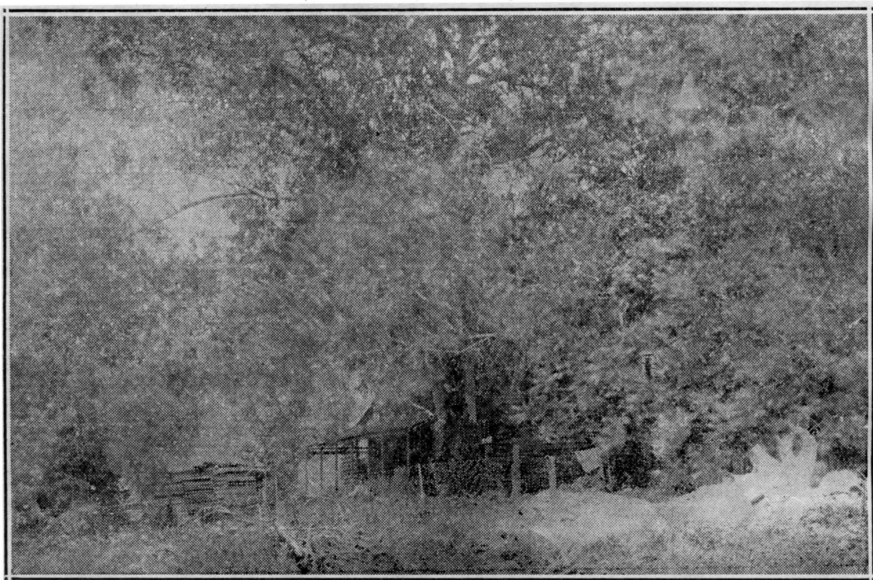
REPLY TO MR. MARKHAM'S QUESTION

Vacaville High School History Class,
Vacaville, California.

I recently saw an article in the Vacaville Reporter about early days in Vacaville, wherein Edwin Markham asked if any one remembered anything about his chum, John Huckins. I remember all about John Huckins and Markham, too.

I was born on what is now the Blake ranch in Pleasants Valley in 1860. When I was a very small boy I was standing on the back porch of the old house, looking up towards the old brick yard south of the house. I saw two boys, mounted on an old white horse, kick-

ing, fighting and beating, trying to get up speed. Their efforts were accompanied with but little success. One of these boys was John Huckins, the other was Edwin Markham. They were running away, going to see the world and all that was in it. Edwin didn't have any hoe, but John had an old musket, which could raise more consternation in those days than the hoe. That evening some one else was doing some hard riding—it was Mrs. Markham, Edwin's mother. She stopped long enough to get what information she could about the runaways, and was gone again. The next day she overhauled them in Berryessa Valley, several miles this side of Monticello. They had



BOYHOOD HOME OF EDWIN MARKHAM (IN LAGOON VALLEY)

killed a calf, dragged it into a thicket, and were engaged in cooking chunks of it over a fire. When asked why they killed the calf, John's only answer was that they were hungry. Mrs. Markham proceeded to berate them for the act, when Johnny Huckins stopped her saying, "You know my father is a lawyer, and I guess I know my cattle. Look at that calf, and you can see for yourself that calf is a maverick, and mavericks belong to any one that can get 'em."

Mrs. Markham was western woman enough to know that Johnny had the best of it. She finally persuaded Edwin to go home with her. I never heard what argument she used, but I presume she convinced him that the public would like to read some pretty nifty

poems in about thirty or forty years, and he was elected to get 'em up. She tried to get Johnny to return, but Johnny was firm in his original intentions. He said he had started out to see the world and was going to do it.

In 1867, Secretary of State Steward negotiated the purchase of what is now known as Alaska, then Russian America. The United States government was outfitting a Brig in San Francisco to survey our new possessions. John Huckins arrived in San Francisco about that time and shipped aboard the Brig as cabin boy. The trip consumed about three years. Then Johnny came back to Pleasants Valley, and well I remember the stories he told of the frozen north, of the whales, the walrus, Polar bears, Indians, hair breadth escapes, and more too.

But Pleasants Valley was too slow and he was soon on the water front in San Francisco.

He made three trips to South America on the old windjammers so common fifty years ago. For lack of space I will relate but one incident of each trip. These incidents came direct from Johnny himself, so they must be so.

On the first South American trip the crew mutinied; Johnny stayed and fought with the captain and eventually the ship was captured and Johnny was taken ashore. He was put in a big empty cask and the cask headed up; the mutineers then drove the cask full of sharp spikes about six inches long. Then they took the cask to the top of a high hill and rolled it down. The momentum carried it part way up another hill on the opposite side of the canyon, and the cask continued to roll back and forth between the two hills until gravity at last stopped it.

John was found by some natives who released him, took him to their camp and cared for him until he was able to travel.

The second voyage was interesting only from a commercial standpoint. While Johnny was in Rio de Janiro, he bought four bits worth of bananas, and had them hung up in the forecastle of the ship. He and the crew of forty men had all they could eat all the way up to San Francisco and when he got there he sold what he had left to a commission merchant for twenty five dollars.

On the third trip the first mate of the ship had a pet monkey. This monkey was not a favorite with the crew, but no man dared look crosswise at that monk without incurring the animosity of the mate.

One evening the monkey made his appearance on the fore-castle head where a group of sailors were lounging on the deck.

Some of his monkey business so enraged one of the sailors that he promptly threw him overboard. Fortunately a loose rope was trailing along side the ship, which the monkey seized and soon he appeared over the side of the ship. He walked to a clear space on the deck, and after thoroughly shaking the water from his shaggy hide he calmly looked the crew over and said, "That's a devil of a way to serve a shipmate." Years after that I asked Johnny about the incident, and he said he never heard him speak another word.

This was the last trip he ever made. Shortly after returning to Vacaville, he was accidentally shot while out hunting, by a man by the name of Jim Wheeler; a 38 Kennedy rifle ball went clear through his body and lodged in his elbow. Old Doc. Cunningham, so well and favorably known in Vacaville, patched him up. A piece of bone had to be cut out of his elbow, which, while not forcing him to lose the use of his arm entirely, disqualified him for a sailor.

Then Johnny became a book agent. Then he studied medicine and became a full fledged M. D., and for many years was resident physician at Samuels Springs in Lake County. Later on he married into the Abernathy family, one of the oldest in Suisun Valley. A few years ago he passed away, loved and respected by all who knew him.

So this is the answer to Poet Markham's question, "What became of my chum, John Huckins?" MEREDITH MILLER.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

By EDWIN MARKHAM

Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting of a brutalized toiler in the deep abyss of labor

God made man in his own image:
in the image of God He made him—Genesis.

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And markt their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with cries against the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim,
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Thru this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Thru this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Powers that made the world,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God, —
This monstrous thing, distorted and soul-quencht?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world
After the silence of the centuries? —EDWIN MARKHAM.

For the Union High School at Vacaville, where I spent long happy years
in my romantic boyhood.

REMINISCENCES OF PIONEER DAYS

HETTIE M. ROSS RYAN

In search of the end of the rainbow to find the Pot of Gold, my father with his little family set sail for California.

The High Seas were chosen rather than the Long Trail. We crossed the Isthmus of Panama, thence, after landing at San Francisco, we boarded another steamer for Eureka, Humboldt County. We arrived there in May, 1864. Many a harrowing tale could be recounted of the onsets between the Indians and the whites. In many cases, no doubt, the white men displayed quite as much of the savage nature as did the red skins.

Many soldiers enlisting with expectation of being sent South into the regular army, were transported to the Pacific Coast to battle with the uncivilized natives of Northern California. Horrible butchery was perpetrated, according to reports. In consequence we carried no ill feeling toward young men, two of whom we knew, for becoming deserters when made to serve under such revolting conditions.

Following our arrival in California, friends from the old home in Michigan, three families in all, had settled in the immediate vicinity of what is now called Allendale, the Allens for whom the dale was later named were among them.

After three years of Coast climate my father's health called for more sunshine.

Sacramento Valley with its sunshine sounded good, and we came to join them. A trip by land seemed most inviting, and nothing urging, 18 days were consumed on the road. The pass over the Coast Range was a mere pony trail for miles used by the mail carrier. So not unlike the days of Ivanhoe, we each mounted our steed for travel. One of our horses bore quite a history, having, as we were told, crossed the "Plains" four times. He became quite a favorite on account of his noble qualities and remained a member of the Ross family until his demise.

Unable to guide a horse I was seated behind my eldest sister, now Mrs. Juliette Marshall of Vacaville. Our horse was not a horse, but rather a little old mule, a discard of the Government, bought at a bargain. We called her Granny, no doubt, on account of her years. She was wise and cunning, and once a real low-down trick was played on us. One day, having lazily lagged behind the party, to make

time, she took a short cut, ducked under a low-bridge cattle trail, through a thicker, and scooped us off.

Our camping outfit was strapped on one lone horse, save what could be tied behind the men's saddles. Two men accompanied our family over the mountains. Our meals were made ready over the camp fire. At night our blankets were spread upon the ground, and we lay down to rest under the blue canopy of heaven. Traveling in May, the weather was ideal. The restlessness of the Indians was our only concern.

About the third night out, being warned at the Government Post to look out for the Indians, we took shelter in one of the cabins at the Fort.

Further on, advice was given to leave no camp fire burning after dark, as the Indians had been troublesome, having run off some of the stock belonging to the settlers. A deep ravine was selected for the night. We were just encamping when a deer was sighted by one of the hunters. Bang! and the venison came rolling into camp. Not an iss, for we all enjoyed the meat for supper.

A grizzly bear hove in sight one day. The men fired, but no one cared to trail him. Again, a big rattler crossed our path. While threading a narrow trail along a precipitous hillside at one point, my father's mount lost her footing. Father swung himself loose on the upper side and stood to watch her roll over and over down the steep incline. Reaching the bottom of the descent, she regained her poise, ready to resume duty.

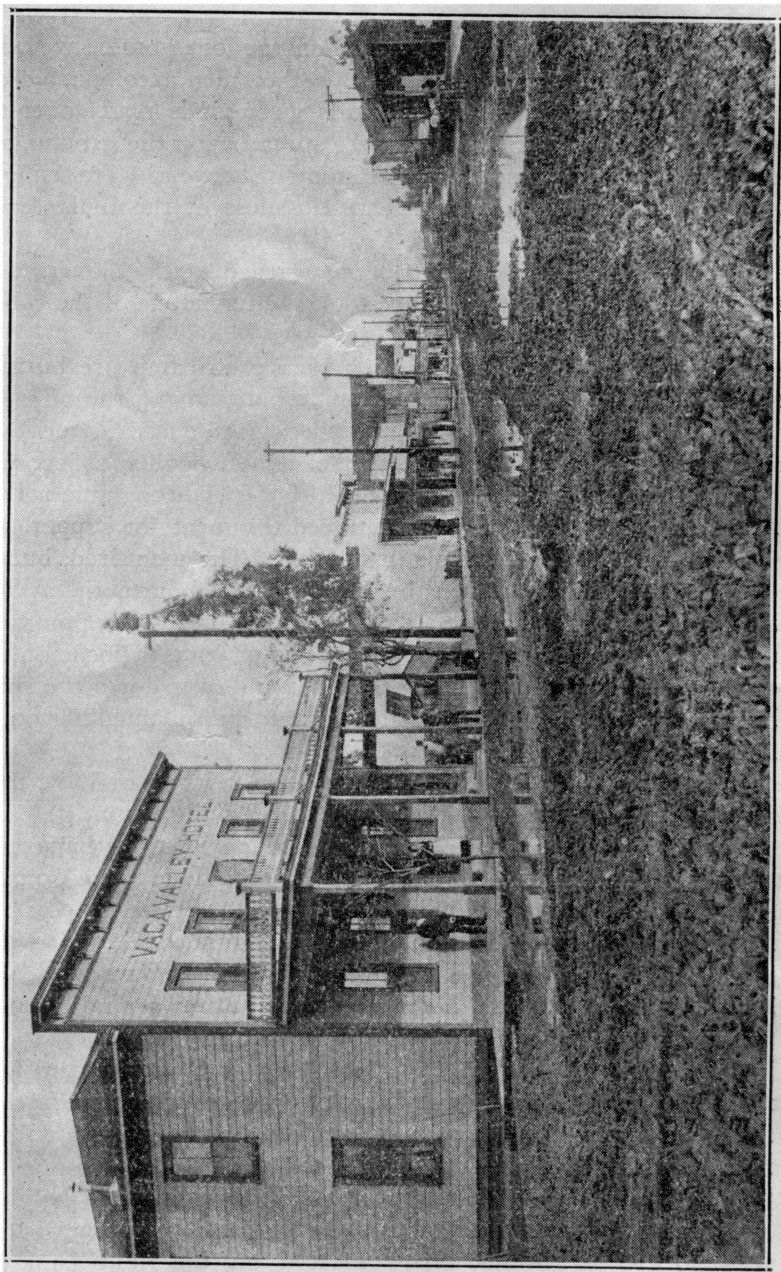
The story of "Little Dog Captain" is a favorite of Laverne's, called for when Grandma tells her stories, so I will recount it.

Captain was a little dog who had fallen into our hands for protection. When we came over "Glass Mountain" in Lake County, the sharp, broken crystals so lacerated his feet that sister took him in her lap, and there he rode until he was again able to walk.

Our journey ended, we found our friends, who made us feel as though it were almost a home coming. Father rented a ranch less than one mile east of the Allen's, on Sweeney Creek.

During the summer the Udell school house in Grant District was erected, discarding the little old red school house farther east. When finished, the new building was duly dedicated with a country dance. Sister joined hands in the quadrille.

To the early Californian, the first day of May was a holiday, and was yearly celebrated by old and young. In the spring of 1868 we all picnicked in an oak grove located on the right bank of Alamo Creek, almost due south of Vacaville Cemetery. The oak



EARLY DAYS IN VACAVILLE

trees are all but gone. We went through Frank Williams's barn yard to reach the grounds. Our coach consisted of four horses hitched to a farm wagon, quite primitive in structure. The seat was a board and blanket. If brakes were needed, the wheels were chained together and made to slide, not at all expedient in a run-away. The children sat on the hay in the wagon box. Gayly we set forth, but our fiery steeds, catching the spirit of the day dashed away like mad. Around and around my father circled them, in the wheat field, until they were subdued. I recall losing my pink sun bonnet, otherwise all came out safely.

In July, 1875, after we laid my father to rest in the Dixon cemetery, my oldest brother became ambitious to make a new start, now assuming the responsibility of the family, in a measure. Through the advice of friends, we moved to Brennan Island, across from Rio Vista. The house that stands to the left of the bridge, crossing from Rio Vista, was erected for our habitation in the fall of 1877. Our sister Juliette was then married to James Marshall, and joined us for the winter.

After a long dry period, through which a drought was predicted, the heavens turned loose, and we were disastrously flooded. The levees broke on every hand. Our young orchard of 500 trees was swept away, and watch was kept day and night, protecting and repairing the stretch of levee still securing our house. The live stock was all ferried across to high land, and every one made ready to go at a moment's notice. Not daring to wait longer, Frank Marshall of Dixon, was rowed across the raging waters of the Sacramento when only four days old. His mother was warmly wrapped, seated in an arm chair, and set into the row boat. Mother and son were safely landed at the foot of the steps of the Rio Vista hotel.

Immediately following the high water, the Marshalls purchased the ranch across the road from the Vacaville cemetery, still in possession of the family. In 1881 another flood completely dislodged us, and all financial ties with Brannan Island were severed.

Little we thought at that time of a bridge ever spanning the Sacramento river. We were somewhat isolated, living where we did. Landings were crude and far between, only as accommodating steamboats consented to make landings at shore lines.

My brother-in-law, Gus Frost, now living in Colorado, most humorously relates his experience in attempting to reach us when he was wooing my sister. Boarding the boat at Sacramento, the captain agreed to land him on a point not far remote from our house. Before arriving, the wind rose to such a gale that the cap-

tain was afraid of being grounded. He found Gus and said: "I can't land, but I will run out the gang plank, and you give a run and leap to shore." "Now," said he, "when I say go, you go." The captain cried "Go!" but Gus said his feet froze to the deck. The patient captain swung the boat about, and at the second command, "Go!" Gus ran and gave a most desperate leap, landing in a thicket of pussy willows. The night was dark, and the moon on the wane, the hour near to midnight, but Gus found her.

Just before the last flood, I went to spend a few days with a friend who had been my teacher, and had married a bachelor neighbor. The levees broke during my visit. The water rose so high that we were forced from the first floor, some ten feet from the ground, into the upper story. As soon as the water began to subside, Mr. Ferguson, anxious for the mail, rowed to Rio Vista. During his absence the roof caught fire from the flue, and we had no means of escape. The fire was soon sighted and we were rescued. The house burned to the water's edge.

Leaving the Island, we came to live with the Marshalls for a time. I attended the old grammar school in Vacaville. There were ten grades at that time. Miss Mary Elliott taught the upper grades, Mr. Tilson the lower.

In June, 1881, I attended the "Teachers' Examination" in Fairfield. Leaving the train at Suisun, we took a high board walk to Fairfield. The elevated walk was necessary on account of inundation in wet weather. There was not much town at that time.

In September following I opened school in Cooper District. I am told the same structure is still in use. Quite a landmark!

The brick building erected by the Baptists, in which they maintained a college for a number of years, stood on the high school hill. The school was later conducted by Stephens and Graham, called California Normal and Scientific School. In the classes were enrolled the names of a number of the present citizens of Vacaville. Professor Stephens was a most excellent instructor, as well as an effective wooer. He married the English teacher of the school.

Vacaville, we are told, was one of the earliest settlements in this section of the country; no doubt, due in many cases to the natural charm of hill and dale, a running stream and the nearby lagoon. Tourists remarked of the pretty little spot among the hills.

The railroad cut her off, when connecting Sacramento with Vallejo, but she never lost her prosperity, as did Silveyville and other towns in this county, although a number of years elapsed before the branch road was built from Elmira to Rumsey.

THE OLD PENA PASS ROAD

DR. WILLIS LINN JEPSON

Before there were roads in our valley there were trails. The oldest and most important trail, at a time when all travel went horse-back, ran from Sonoma Mission through Suisun Valley to Lagoon Valley, thence across the plain to Sutter's Fort.

This trail from the south entered Lagoon Valley over Pena Pass, the notch in the hills at the southern corner of Lagoon Valley; thence it ran northerly over the valley floor past the lake that gave the valley its name to Lagoon Pass. Pena Pass is not a low pass like Lagoon Pass between Lagoon Valley and Vaca Valley, nor like that pass at the southwestern corner of the valley, where the present highway goes out southerly, named Tolenas Pass. Still, it is a fairly low pass and formed the most direct route from the south to the first white settlements in Lagoon Valley. When the trail was made into a road it followed exactly the old trail over Pena Pass. That old road over Pena Pass is to this day an open road, though much disused, but the portion of it northerly toward Lagoon Pass has, long ago, disappeared for the most part. My friend, Alexander Steiger, the engineer, tells me, however, that the old land records in this region often contain reference by metes and bounds to this northerly part of the road, the part now completely vanished.

It may well be asked why the road should have entered the hills when it could better keep to the open plain of the Sacramento Valley floor. The answer is very simple. Men, horses and hoofed cattle must have water. There was no water on the plains and there was water in the hills. There were springs in the hills; for the whole summer the two creeks, the Alamo and Ulatis, ran in those days free and clear streams as far as the edge of the plains; and then there was the lagoon in Lagoon Valley, of much importance to the herds of cattle on the great Rancho los Putos. Long, long ago a little lad of six saw one day Lagoon Lake, as it was called for the first time. It seemed to him, used only to the long dry summers and arid floors of our valleys, the largest body of water that could possibly be; larger than the Indian Ocean tinted a pale blue in his geography, and vastly more important and interesting because it was right at hand as a playground of pure delight. Indeed, you might hope to walk around it in one whole summer's day if you started early and kept at it long enough. And then, some years later, two

unfeeling men came along with shovels, one winter's afternoon, drained the lake into Encinos Creek and thus destroyed childhood's finest body of water in all the wide earth.

Before the day of the overland railroad in Solano County a stage ran over this road from Sacramento to Vallejo. There were, of course, no bridges in the earliest days, and when wagons of any kind came to the creeks, they passed over by ford. In times of very high water in the winter, one must needs wait until the flood subsided. A vestige of one of these old fords across the Alamo is to be seen alongside one of the present day bridges over that creek near the Frank Dickie place.

Naturally, many distinguished travelers have passed over our old road. In the year 1848, about July 1, a young army lieutenant, William Tecumseh Sherman, stopped at Vaca's rancho, that is the old adobe homestead of Manuel Cabeza de Vaca in Lagoon Pass, and then went on his way northerly to the newly discovered gold placers at Coloma. This is the same Sherman who was later to acquire such renown as a Federal general in Georgia. Over this road walked daily in the school week, during the early seventies, a youth on his way to the college in the village of Vacaville, who at a later date was to produce songs that for their social significance and sheer beauty of meter were to equal any of the English tongue in the New World save only those of Edgar Allen Poe. That lad lived on a little ranch in the southeastern corner of Lagoon Valley with his widowed mother, Elizabeth Winchell Markham, and he was Edwin Markham. Over this road, too, there passed, southbound, in May, 1847, Theodore Hartwig, collector for the London Horticultural Society of England, and the first botanical explorer of the Sacramento Valley. And there were many, many others of note, some wholly forgotten, some whose records may yet be recovered.

It has long been a wonder in my mind as to just how the earliest European settlers, coming from the southward, crossed the Bay of San Francisco and its arms with their cattle and household belongings on their way to the first settlements made by them in the north coast range valleys, in the years before there were any vessels regularly plying on the bay. I have heard it said that a rider alongside his horse has been known to swim Carquinez Straits. Out of my own experience, swimming animals of my pack train across California rivers in flood, the feat of Carquinez seems to me credible. It has also been said that bands of cattle have swum the straits, though this seems to me most doubtful. In any event the

bay and its arms formed a great barrier against travel north and south.

In the Department of California, Republic of Mexico, the Spanish authorities were often disturbed by roving and often lawless bands of Americans, who had come from the United States across the great plains and had entered California without authorization or passports. On one of these occasions, in 1846, General Castro, then in command at San Jose, sent an order by a lieutenant to Mission San Rafael for gathering up a band of government horses. The lieutenant did so, proceeding by way of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. In other words, he went by Sonoma Mission and must, of course, have traveled the Pena Pass road, running through Lagoon Valley and Vaca Valley (because it was the only way), thence across the plains of the Sacramento Valley to the Sacramento river. The records show that he forded the Sacramento river far above Sutter's Fort, thence proceeding down the east side of the Great Valley to a suitable ford over the San Joaquin River, and after that going directly to San Jose. The interest of this story, for us in Vaca Valley, lies in demonstrating that the Pena Pass road through Vaca Valley and Lagoon Valley was, in those years, on a regular route from San Rafael and Sonoma to San Jose and Monterey. And in that demonstration there is a word of significance as to travel routes in California before the days of the discovery of gold.

One February afternoon decades ago, I saw a spot in a garden on the coast of Italy, west of Genoa, where workmen in excavating had uncovered a section of the old Roman road. Over this road in the ancient times passed Hannibal and his armies, over it went the legions of Julius Caesar on their way to further Gaul and Britannia. A tablet commemorated distinguished names of men whose feet had trod that pavement. Our little road in fame is not to be compared in the remotest degree with the road which carried the Roman infantry and the Roman Eagles, but it is, nevertheless, to us of this land, nearer and dearer by far. And I have often thought that it were wise to deepen and strengthen our interest by erecting on a suitable spot in Lagoon Pass a memorial stone reciting that on such a day, month and year, such and such famous persons passed over this road. By searching the past it could well be made an illustrious inscription, stirring both the intellect and the imagination. For the road is worth remembrance. It is a road to set store by in memory, use and deed. It is a road of happiness and good will, because over it comes back the wanderer to the land that

bore him, where the roots of his being have struck deeply into the soil of the valleys that look on the tan-colored hills and on mountains, stirring strange longings, that lie, dim and mysterious, on distant horizons.



THE ELMIRA-VACAVILLE RAILROAD

The railroad between Elmira and Vacaville was built in the seventies by Bush Stevenson, the grandfather of Richard Stevenson. The first locomotive used on this road was known as the "Flea." Passengers and freight were carried in one end of the "Flea," and the engine was in the other end. The "Flea" was used for one year and then taken to Napa Valley, where it was set on ties by the side of the track and used as a waiting-room.

The next locomotive was called the "Cottontail." In the "Cottontail" era the passengers did not ride in the same car with the engine, but rode in cars drawn behind it. The first winter that the "Cottontail" was in operation, there was not much freight, so Mr. Stevenson, wishing to cut down expenses, had a carpenter build a treadmill in a box car. It was planned to have a horse walk on this treadmill and furnish power to run the box car and pull another car. On the day that the horse-locomotive was to be tried out a crowd gathered to witness the affair. Mr. Stevenson put the family buggy horse in the car. The car started off to Elmira, but the brakes would not hold and the car began to go too fast for the old gray horse. The horse fell down and was rolled around on the treadmill, but the car was stopped before the horse was seriously hurt. The horse had lost some skin, but suffered no other injuries. They got the car turned around at Elmira, intending to come back to Vacaville, but the horse could not move the car up the slight grade from Elmira to Vacaville, so the "horse-locomotive" plan was given up.

ADOBE ARCHITECTURE

The adobe in which the early settlers housed themselves was not beautiful, but very ugly. It was easily built and comfortable when occupied. There was no ornamentation within or without, and as every man was his own builder and architect his building and architecture was generally like his neighbors'. A mansion in 1814 had a wooden floor and a rawhide for a front door, and wooden barred windows let in the sunshine and air.

The only adobe structure remaining around Vacaville is the old Pena place located in Lagoon Valley. The walls are about two feet thick. The framework is of wood, with bricks and adobe plastered on. The adobe is whitewashed. Most of the adobe in this dwelling today is seen in the attic. A few Indians were brought from Santa Barbara to build the adobe house, as the Vaca Valley Indians were unskilled in this art. They mixed mud with straw in form of blocks and let them bake in the sun. When dry they put the blocks together, thus forming a house.

It was in this adobe home that Maria Dolores Lyon, a granddaughter of both the Vacas and Penas, was born in 1849. When her father and mother were married at the old adobe home of the Vacas, there was a fiesta which lasted a week. Guests from the old Spanish families came from all over the state. Some even rode horseback from Los Angeles. A part of the entertainment at the fiesta consisted of a bear and bull fight.

The old adobe homes of California were scenes of much feasting, romance and revelry, where every guest was made welcome, where señoritas loved to be courted by ardent and gay caballeros, where children often played with nuggets of gold instead of marbles, and where Indians labored for the white man who had come to civilize and convert them.

PRUNINGS FROM VACA VALLEY

LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

At the time of Lincoln's assassination J. R. Miller took the only San Francisco newspaper in Vaca Valley. It was the Alta California, which is now the San Francisco Examiner. When the paper arrived the majority of the population of the valley was present to hear the news. Mr. Miller was standing on the front porch of his home holding the paper in his hands and reading aloud, when a sudden gust of wind tore it from his grasp. Meredith Miller, who was a lad of about five, and his sister ran after it, but each tried to have the glory of bringing the paper back and in the struggle the paper was again seized by the high north wind and this time was carried away by a whirlwind. It was lifted high into the sky and was swept rapidly eastward toward Putman's Peak. Instantly the men present sprang on their horses and dashed after the paper, but they were too late, for it dropped down into a glade near the top and was not to be found, although people searched for it throughout the following week. The only newspaper in Vaca Valley telling of Lincoln's death was gone.

WILD GAME

This region was infested with huge grizzly and black bears and mountain lions. The bears would come out in plain sight. They would stand on their haunches and eat sweet acorns from the overhanging boughs of oak trees. Mountain lions would attack horses and cattle when very hungry. These beasts lasted only during the days of the muzzle loading rifles. After the powerful breech-loading rifles were invented these wild creatures became extinct.





W. H. S. Turner.

V. H. S. '05',